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DE RUEHSB #0430/01 1411542  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 211542Z MAY 09 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4524  
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2843  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2962  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1401  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2225  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2590  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 3010  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 5451  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2134  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000430

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH  
DRL FOR N. WILETT  
AF/EPS FOR ANN BREITER  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS  
STATE PASS TO TREASURY FOR D. PETERS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR L. DOBBINS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS  
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR MICHELLE GAVIN  
PRETORIA FOR LEGAL ATTACHE AND RSO  
LONDON FOR IRS  
DEPT FOR DS/CR/CIL  
DEPT FOR CA/PPT/L/LA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/21/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [EAGR](#) [CASC](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: AMCIT INVOLVED IN VIOLENT ZIMBABWEAN FARM INVASION

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

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SUMMARY  
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11. (SBU) The Zimbabwean President of the Senate, Edna Madzongwe, is carrying out a violent farm invasion of a commercial citrus farm with an annual estimated export crop worth US\$4 million. The invasion and ejection of the title holder appear to violate local law, as the Zimbabwean High Court has issued several rulings that support the owner, Richard Etheredge. Post has recently learned that while the invasion has been orchestrated by Edna Madzongwe, the beneficiary is her daughter, Farai Madzongwe, a U.S. citizen by birth currently living on the farm and attempting to sell the crop. Disturbingly, even after the formation of the transitional government, some elements of the old guard continue to undermine what little private investment remains.  
END SUMMARY.

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Senate President Behind Violent Farm Grab  
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12. (SBU) On May 13, poloff met with Richard Etheredge, title holder of the disputed Stockdale Farm in the Mashonaland West province of Zimbabwe. Etheredge has been engaged in an ownership dispute with Senate President Edna Madzongwe (ZANU-PF) over the 55,000-tree citrus farm located in Chegutu since 2007. That dispute turned violent in 2008 and 2009 as Madzongwe orchestrated invasions of war veterans and ZANU-PF youth that resulted in the death of one man, gun shot wounds to three others, and beatings of several Etheredge farm

employees.

¶3. (C) Madzongwe is a notorious farm invader and has already seized between eight and fourteen farms, according to different local estimates, since the beginning of fast-track land reform in 2000. The Etheredge family has been less quick than other victims of land seizures to vacate their farm and has challenged Madzongwe through both local courts and regional bodies. The family has received several favorable local rulings from the Zimbabwean High Court, one of which threw out Madzongwe's original offer letter in 2007, as the farm had not been properly registered for reallocation. A second High Court ruling in February 2009 ruled that Etheredge was innocent of charges of refusing to vacate the farm. Etheredge was also one of the 56 farmers who won relief in a November 2008 SADC Tribunal ruling that these farm seizures were based on racial discrimination and therefore violated Zimbabwe's SADC treaty obligations. These court victories appear to have hardened Madzongwe's resolve to take the farm over and increased her willingness to resort to violence.

¶4. (C) In March 2009, Etheredge was finally forced off the farm by ZANU-PF youths and war veterans led by a notorious veteran named Gilbert Moyo. While attempting to return to the farm in mid-April, police guarding the property fired upon a vehicle carrying Etheredge's son, Peter, and several employees. Three of the employees were wounded and treated at a local hospital. One man remains at the Avenues Hospital in Harare after having been shot in the knee. In a separate

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incident a week earlier, a local man was beaten to death by Madzongwe supporters after being caught stealing oranges.

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Amcit Daughter Now Benefiting from Farm  
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¶5. (C) Etheredge informed us that while Edna Madzongwe has used her influence to gain an offer letter for Stockdale Farm, carry out the land invasion, and curry police support, her daughter, Farai Madzongwe, is the financial beneficiary of the farm and is currently living on the property and attempting to sell the crop.

¶6. (C) Etheredge told us that he had recently learned that Farai Madzongwe is an American citizen. (NOTE. Consular section in Harare has confirmed that Farai Madzongwe is an American citizen by birth. END NOTE.) Etheredge told us that Farai has been seeking employment in Harare with international NGOs working in sustainable development. She was quoted by local press as saying, "My mother is considered as one of the top law officers in the country. My mother is not in the habit of breaking the law."

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Citrus Crop Worth US\$4 million Annually  
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¶7. (C) The farm is highly automated and possesses an advanced irrigation system that maintains the 55,000-tree orange grove. Etheredge estimated the farm generates US\$4 million in export earnings of oranges and kumquats annually. 90 percent of the farm's fruit is exported to Europe and the Middle East, totaling over 6,000 tons per year. The farm seizure came just as the current crop was ripening.

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COMMENT  
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¶8. (C) While land invasions in Zimbabwe are nothing new, this highly visible case is unique in that the beneficiary is an American citizen and the daughter of a powerful ZANU-PF

official. Disturbingly, even after the formation of the transitional government, some elements of the old guard, like Edna Madzongwe, show absolutely no sign of changing their ways or letting up in their vigorous pursuit of riches for themselves and their families. Even as ZANU-PF officials chide the West for not investing enough in the "new" Zimbabwe, some hardliners continue to undermine what little private investment remains. END COMMENT.

MCGEE